

HOUSE BILL NO. 366

INTRODUCED BY N. BIXBY

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE STUDY OF THE IMPACTS OF WELFARE REFORM EFFORTS WITHIN THE FAIM PROJECT AND TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; PROVIDING FOR REGULAR REPORTS TO THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE; AND AMENDING SECTION 53-4-721, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Welfare reform impacts -- study. (1) The department shall conduct

and incorporate into any evaluation of the FAIM project or temporary assistance for needy families, as defined in 53-4-201, an ongoing study of the impact of the effects of welfare reform on children and families. The study must include but not be limited to:

(a) a review of the adequacy of the services that children and families receive while participating in the FAIM project and temporary assistance for needy families;

(b) an analysis to determine whether any bias based on race or ethnicity exists in the system;

(c) identification of any impacts that the laws, policies, or procedures have on the separation of children from the parents, siblings, or others in a family, including but not limited to children being placed in foster care or out-of-home placements;

(d) any impacts of the program on the education of children in the program;

(e) an analysis of the adequacy of training for staff to understand and deal fairly with an ethnically and racially diverse population;

(f) a description and analysis of the programs on each of the seven Montana Indian reservations;

(g) an analysis of the interrelationships of the FAIM project and temporary assistance for needy families and any impacts, including fiscal impacts, on other programs within the department, including child care, foster care, food stamps and other food or nutrition programs for low-income families, medicaid, and the state children's health insurance program and including any cost-shifting or caseload increases or decreases that are caused by or may be correlated with increases or decreases in the FAIM project or

1 temporary assistance to needy families caseload.

2 (2) The department shall report on the project evaluation and study to the children, families,
3 health, and human services interim committee by August 15 of each year that immediately precedes a
4 legislative session.

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6 **Section 2.** Section 53-4-721, MCA, is amended to read:

7 **"53-4-721. Sanctions policy -- study.** (1) The department shall conduct and, ~~when appropriate,~~
8 incorporate into the any FAIM project evaluation a an ongoing study to investigate ~~investigating~~ the impact
9 of its sanctions policy on families participating in the FAIM project. The study must include but not be
10 limited to:

11 (a) information on the rate of successful appeals of sanctions imposed on individuals;

12 (b) what circumstances led to any improper sanctioning;

13 (c) what services or assistance could have prevented the improper sanctioning of the individual;

14 and

15 (d) what services or assistance could be provided to individuals to lower the sanction rate in the
16 FAIM project.

17 ~~(2) The study must also include model policies outlining progressive disciplinary practices used~~
18 ~~in the private sector and the applicability of those practices to the FAIM program.~~

19 ~~——(3) The study must be conducted as part of the department's current ongoing efforts to evaluate~~
20 ~~the FAIM project.~~

21 ~~(4)(3) The department shall report the progress of the study on the project evaluation and study~~
22 ~~to the 57th legislature children, families, health, and human services interim committee by August 15 of~~
23 ~~each year that immediately precedes a legislative session."~~

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25 NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Notification to tribal governments.** The secretary of state shall send
26 a copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little
27 Shell band of Chippewa.

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29 NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
30 integral part of Title 53, chapter 4, part 7, and the provisions of Title 53, chapter 4, part 7, apply to

1 [section 1].

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